OPEN AIR

THE SKY IS NO LIMIT FOR A LOCAL ENTREPRENEUR ARMED WITH A REMOTE-CONTROLLED HELICOPTER AND A CAMERA

PAGE 4

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City swap-talk on the clock

Springbank development. City in 11th-hour discussions with developer over possible land trade

ANGELA MULLINS
angela.mullins@metronews.ca

City officials are keeping details about a proposed land swap for Reservoir Hill close to their chests.

John Braam, the city's engineer, said administrators had not yet met Thursday with Ayerswood Development, which wants to build a 12-storey condo on the site. They are expected to meet before Tuesday's council meeting and the results will be made public then, Braam said.

Everything else will be kept confidential, he said, including which lots the city might be willing to exchange for the controversial parcel at Springbank Drive and Commissioners Road West.

Ayerswood's lawyer had not returned phone messages from Metro as of press time.

The result of the new talks could affect Tuesday's vote on the development. Previous votes have been split, and Coun. Dale Henderson — who last week voted in favour of the plan and proposed the land swap — now says he's on the fence.

"I want to see a good deal, that's what I want to see," he said Thursday. "If it just comes back the way it is, I'm not going to be a happy camper."

Bill Hopkins, an opponent of the development, isn't holding his breath that a deal can be reached by Tuesday.

"If that occurs, I'd be stunned. I think it's just a smokescreen by a couple of councillors to reduce a little bit of pressure on them," he said. "The developer has been obsessed with developing Reservoir Hill. There's absolutely no incentive for him to swap land."

THINKING GLOBAL

Leenat Jilani, 22, of London, will represent Canada next month at the Y20 summit in Puebla, Mexico, helping to serve as the youth voice at the G20 talks. Story, page 3. ANGELA MULLINS/METRO

Hot teams, cool game

There's a real possibility the Stanley Cup could end up in — hush yo' mouth — the Deep South PAGE 16

Rules of rom-com

The Reel Guys dissect Emily Blunt's new film, The Five-Year Engagement PAGE 9

Let us braise

Slow-cooked balsamic short ribs and mashed potatoes will sate any appetite PAGE 15

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SHOPPERS DRUG MART

30 Forest City Road Races and counting

On your mark. Nearly 2,300 local runners will be chugging along in city's core Saturday

After more than a decade spent behind the scenes of the Forest City Road Races, Jackie Prince has come to the conclusion that Londoners aren't the most punctual group.

"This is last-minute London, right?" she said with a giggle when estimating 300-plus runners will show up unregistered the morning of to take part in the 30th annual event. That group will join the more than 2,000 already signed up to take over the downtown core.

"To see the support from the start of the year and then see the growth continue, it's been phenomenal," added Prince, the liaison for the Thames Valley Children's Centre.

Participants can break a serious sweat Saturday in either the half-marathon (about 21 kilometres), 10K, 5K or 1K runs.

"There's a distance for everybody — run, walk or roll," first-year race director Steve Ryall said.

A few fresh features will make their Road Races debut this weekend, including a VIP tent, which was sold out in late February, and a carnival-like gathering at Victoria Park.

"I think the entertainment value around the race has increased this year," Ryall added.

Ryall, Prince and more than 350 volunteers have been organizing one of the largest running events of the year piece-by-piece since last July. Their work translates to a sizable donation to the Thames Valley Children's Centre. However, they refrain from setting fundraising goals.

"The event is not necessarily set up to raise funds, it's about the awareness of the Thames Valley Children's Centre," Ryall said. "Yes, it's great to raise the funds, but it's not our No. 1 goal."

The non-profit rehabilitation centre is grateful for the financial support, but knows the Road Races is also about putting on an appealing show.

"It helps us leverage funding through the government if we can show how the community supports our endeavours," Prince said. JOHN MATISZ/METRO

Traffic advisory

- Parts of roads around the perimeter of Victoria Park (Wellington Street, Richmond Street, Dufferin Avenue and Central Avenue) will be closed Saturday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.
- All other potential closures downtown will be at the discretion of London police.

John Ferguson, 53, of London gears up for the Forest City Road Races' 30th anniversary Saturday. Ferguson, an employee at Runners' Choice (207 Dundas St.), is a frequent competitor in the Road Races. JOHN MATISZ/METRO

Londoner taking on the world

Leenat Jilani has to write her final exams next week. Then, she's quite literally off to face the world.

The 22-year-old Londoner and third-year student at Western's Brescia University College has been selected to represent Canada at the youth arm of May's G20 talks in Puebla, Mexico. Called Y20, the forum aims to give world leaders a youth's-eye look at issues being tackled during the larger summit.

For Jilani — who will be joined by six fellow Canadians and others from around the globe — Y20 is a chance to give southwest Ontario a voice by highlighting problems, like an ailing industrial base, and promoting strengths, such as agriculture.

"(We need to say) Ontario's here, and this is what we have to offer," she said.

The trip won't be her first effort in international diplomacy. She recently travelled to Southeast Asia, where she helped connect local businesses with opportunities in countries like Malaysia.

That work was done through Global Vision, the same non-profit that chose Canada's Y20 representatives.

Just as important as putting Ontario on the map is making sure youth views are known on hot political issues, like the European debt crisis, she said.

"We are the next generation that's going to take everything forward.... It's important to hear what we have to say." ANGELA MULLINS/METRO

Ornge

Conflicting stories turning up heat

Health Minister Deb Matthews is standing by her testimony that she was powerless to bring Ornge to heel, despite conflicting accounts of whether the government had any leverage to rein in the province's troubled air-ambulance service.

Critics demanded an explanation Thursday after a legislative committee heard conflicting accounts about whether the government had any power over Ornge, which is under a criminal probe for "financial irregularities."

A lawyer who worked for Ornge testified Wednesday the government had all the tools it needed to rein in the organization. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Moody's

Ontario's debt rating takes a hit

Moody's Investors Service has downgraded Ontario's debt rating, citing the cash-strapped province's growing debt burden and risks in achieving a balanced budget by 2017-18.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Rafferty

Trial returns to video evidence

The car belonging to the man accused of killing Victoria Stafford was a unique assortment of poorly done or oddly fashioned modifications, and those features that can be seen in surveillance video from the day the eight-year-old was abducted, court heard Thursday.

The Crown's case against Michael Rafferty wound down Thursday the same way it began, with a focus on video. Gerald Lanna, a forensic video analyst with Ontario Provincial Police, examined surveillance tapes that the Crown alleges help trace Rafferty's route on April 8, 2009.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

1 NEWS

On the web

Risqué reading

Seems it's not just the ladies who are devoted to the erotic trilogy Fifty Shades of Grey. Men — young, old, gay and straight — have been devouring newcomer EL James' sexy series. Read the full story at metronews.ca

Mobile news

Canada has spoken: Woodfield is the nation's favourite neighbourhood. The Canadian Institute of Planners released the winners of the second annual Great Places in Canada contest Thursday morning, with London's Woodfield losing in the judging portion but taking home a people's-choice trophy in the Great Neighbourhood category. Scan the code for the story.

Photo business flying Sky Eye for recent Western grad

Entrepreneurship. 22-year-old turns his new take on aerial photography into a moneymaker

ANGELA MULLINS
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Chris Bacik didn't set out to become a business mogul.

Truth be told, the 22-year-old Western University grad was more interested in earning a few extra bucks than making it big when Sky Eye Media started two years ago.

Now, with a new bachelor's degree in engineering and an honours in business administration under his belt, Bacik is toying with the idea of making the company his full-time gig.

"For the next couple of years, at least, I'm going to see how it goes," the Barrie native said. "Everyone just seems to love (the idea)."

Originally called Simcoe View, Sky Eye combines a bit of entrepreneurial know-how with Bacik's passion — and talent — for flying remote-controlled helicopters.

Bacik grew up racing high-performance remote-controlled cars and started experimenting with helicopters in his late teens. Pretty soon, he'd steadied his hand enough to attach a camera without worrying about a crash and smash.

"I just kind of thought of it as a fun idea," he said.

At some point — likely as he soared over Lake Simcoe snapping gorgeous shots not possible from the ground — Bacik realized there was money to be made.

So in May 2010, he hopped on his Sea-Doo and posted fliers on docks around cottage country. His pitch: Aerial pictures of your property for a fraction of the fee charged by photographers who work from planes.

Check it out

- Pictures from Sky Eye Media's portfolio and owner Chris Bacik's contact info is available on the company's website, skyeyemedia.com.

The idea took like wildfire: Bacik has racked up about 500 jobs. Most of the business has come from real-estate agents interested in giving potential buyers a bird's-eye view of high-end properties, but his portfolio also includes picturesque views of golf courses and weddings.

With an extra $5,000 awarded to him at a recent business-pitch competition for Western and Fanshawe College students, a Sky Eye expansion is underway.

The money, Bacik said, will go toward a second remote-controlled helicopter equipped with a video camera, offering more services in the London area and possibly setting up an office here.

He plans to hire his first employee in August when the video-enabled copter is ready to hit the sky.

Expansion

"I want to move into targeting documentary (filmmakers).... That opens up a whole new market."
Chris Bacik, on a business expansion he is looking forward to

Chris Bacik, a 22-year-old Western University grad, flies a remote-controlled helicopter that he modified to carry a camera for aerial photography and video. Bacik has been awarded $5,000 in a business-pitch competition for student entrepreneurs. DAVE CHIDLEY/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Bentley says he won't give up on a better name for energy merger

Energy Minister Chris Bentley hasn't abandoned the idea of having a "real name" for the merger of the Ontario Power Authority and the Independent Electricity System Operator after all.

Bentley complained the energy sector is full of agencies known by acronyms like the OPA and IESO when he announced the planned merger of the two electricity planning agencies.

The minister said at the time he wanted the new agency to have a real name, but in legislation introduced Thursday, it is known as the Ontario Electricity System Operator, or OESO.

However, a spokesman for Bentley says OESO is "a working title" in the legislation and the government will come up with an actual name as the merger progresses.

The government hopes to save about $25 million a year by merging the two agencies — a move it says will increase efficiency and make the system more affordable.

The NDP wants the Liberals to go even further and merge the new planning agency, the OESO, with Ontario Power Generation, OPG, and the transmission utility, Hydro One.

The Progressive Conservatives had promised to completely shut down the Ontario Power Authority if they had won last fall's election.

Chris Bentley METRO FILE

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Online luring probe

Man charged in cyber-crime case

A London man was charged Wednesday after an Internet luring investigation that began earlier this month.

Jacob Martens, 21, has been charged with luring and communicating to pay for sexual services of a person under 18. METRO

April 10 theft

Robbery charge

Police have charged William Pieszchala, 21 after an investigation related to a robbery of a TD Canada Trust at Wonderland Road. METRO

Melanoma. Debate on tanning beds heats up

A Belleville woman is urging the province to pass a private member's bill to ban people under 18 years of age from using tanning beds.

Kate Neale, 22, was diagnosed with malignant melanoma after five years of using tanning beds three or four times a week.

She says the salon where she worked and tanned encouraged teens to tan three times a week.

Just like at Queen's Park, the debate rages in the Forest City.

Kaylene McKinnon with the Middlesex London Health Unit said more and more young people are developing melanoma.

"Malignant melanoma is the second most common cancer of people 15 to 29," she said.

Steve Buchanan from the Tan Factory in London said the controversy is fuelled by people who have an agenda.

"The cancer society jumps on this issue every year at this time because it makes them a lot of money," he said.

"The cancer society is a big sponge for donations. They don't do much for research or cure cancer, but they need the money to keep those bums in the seats in Toronto."

A recent poll found 21 per cent of Ontario teens in Grade 12 and 11 in Grade 11 used tanning beds. AM980/AM980.CA

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Too posh for Parliament

Oda to repay cost of London limo

International Co-operation Minister Bev Oda has agreed to repay almost $3,000 she charged taxpayers for limousine service while staying at a posh hotel in London.

The beleaguered Conservative minister had already coughed up $1,353.81 in extra hotel charges earlier this week after The Canadian Press reported that she upgraded to the five-star-plus Savoy Hotel for unknown reasons during a conference last June. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Private-member's bill

Abortion motion 'unfortunate': PM

Prime Minister Stephen Harper says he'll vote against a motion introduced by one of his MPs that has reignited the national abortion debate.

The Opposition and pro-choice advocates criticized Harper for allowing debate on the motion Thursday.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Massacre trial

Norwegians sing to protest terror

Inspired by a Facebook-organized protest, tens of thousands of Norwegians flocked to public squares Thursday, ignored the drenching rain and lifted their voices in song.

Their target: Far-right fanatic Anders Behring Breivik, now on trial for a bomb-and-shooting rampage that killed 77 people. Their weapon: A children's tune he claims has been used to brainwash youth into supporting immigration.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Charles Taylor convicted

Sierra Leone salutes verdict

Thousands of people who survived Sierra Leone's brutal civil war a decade ago celebrated Thursday after learning that Charles Taylor had been convicted for his role in the conflict that left behind countless amputees and traumatized former child soldiers.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Alleged Nazi living low key in Quebec

Accused war criminal.
Honey seller resides in rural town

A man alleged to be one of the world's most-wanted Nazi war criminals is living a quiet life keeping bees and selling honey in rural Quebec.

Vladimir Katriuk's name was recently added to the Simon Wiesenthal Center's list of the world's 10 most-wanted suspected former Nazis.

During a conversation at his house, the 91-year-old Katriuk told The Canadian Press that he wasn't aware his name was added to the list and did not want to talk about it.

The married Ukrainian-Canadian of Ormstown, Que., won't discuss anything about his time in the military or the serious allegations he faces. He has in the past denied taking part in war atrocities.

The prominent Jewish human-rights group says it ranked Katriuk at No. 4 on the list after new evidence emerged allegedly linking him directly to atrocities committed in a 1943 village massacre in Eastern Europe.

Vladimir Katriuk at his honeybee farm in Ormstown, Que., on Wednesday.
RYAN REMIORZ/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Efraim Zuroff of the Simon Wiesenthal Center says the Canadian government should immediately strip Katriuk of his citizenship and start the process to deport him to Europe — where he could face prosecution.

The Federal Court ruled in 1999 that Katriuk lied about his voluntary service for German authorities during the Second World War in order to obtain Canadian citizenship. But Ottawa overturned a decision to revoke Katriuk's citizenship and allowed him to stay in the country.

Zuroff says it's ultimately up to the Harper government to determine whether to take away Katriuk's citizenship.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Astronaut in training

Justin Dowd wins Race for Space

Justin Dowd from Worcester, Mass., has won the Race for Space, the competition to select one Metro reader to travel into space.

Dowd beat candidates from across the globe to win the coveted once-in-a-lifetime ticket on board a space plane currently being built by space-flight company SXC (Space Expedition Curaçao).

Dowd has both the mental and physical strength needed to be a perfect astronaut. The physics and maths undergraduate wowed the judging panel with his chalkboard stop-motion video on Einstein's theory of relativity. He is also currently training for a grueling endurance race.

"He really provides an amazing package in the combined qualities of scientific background, artistic qualities, dedication and the gift to tell a fascinating story," said Harry Van Hulten, SXC test pilot and member of the jury. METRO WORLD NEWS

LONDON TRANSIT NEWS

ROUTE SCHEDULE CHANGES

EFFECTIVE APRIL 29 - SEPTEMBER 1, 2012

SPRING SCHEDULE CHANGES

6 Richmond
13 Wellington
27 Fanshawe
33 Proudfoot

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Vespa unveiled in India

Models pose with a Vespa scooter during its launch in Mumbai, India, Thursday. The Italian company hopes to carve out a market for luxury scooters in one of the most cost-conscious markets in the world. The Vespa LX will cost around 66,661 rupees ($1,282 US) in India, a 40 per cent premium to most scooters, but still the lowest sticker price in the world. RAFIQ MAQBOOL/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Mortgages. Flaherty eyes tighter CMHC oversight

The federal government is increasing oversight on the issuing of government-backed mortgages in Canada, while also putting more of the risk for lending on the banks.

As previously signalled in the budget, Finance Minister Jim Flaherty tabled changes Thursday that will place Canada's Mortgage and Housing Corp. under the control of the federal financial regulator.

Flaherty said CMHC has become a significant financial-sector player in Canada, and it was appropriate that it meet the high standards of soundness demanded by the Office of the Superintendent of Financial Institutions.

"I've been concerned about CMHC for some time. In this sense, it's become an important financial institution in Canada and it was not subject to the same supervision" as banks, he said.

Under the changes, CMHC will be subject to annual "stress tests" like those that currently exist for banks to ensure its financial soundness under extreme economic conditions.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Minor tweaks

"This isn't going to make a big difference to either the real-estate market or Canadians."

Craig Alexander, TD Bank chief economist

Market Minute

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KIM AND KANYE, A MATCH MADE IN ... HOLLYWOOD

THE LIST
Neil Morton
Metro

1 Bachelor Canada reveal. The Canadian version of The Bachelor franchise debuts this fall, and next Tuesday, May 1, the first ever Canuck bachelor will be revealed. They are dropping daily hints at BachelorCanada.ca about who the lucky guy will be. Here's your main hint: It's not me. I am taken. I know — you're all devastated.

2 The Windsor Hum. A mysterious, low-frequency rumble dubbed the Windsor Hum has been annoying the heck out of people in Windsor, Ont., for the past couple of years. Apparently, it originates from an industrial site in Michigan, and even our feds are now investigating. There's a @TheWindsorHum account on Twitter. Minus that hum noise.

3 Triple play. The Toronto Blue Jays turned a triple play in a 4-3 win over Kansas City, their first since 1979. Though it was really their first since 1992, if you count the terrible missed call in Game 3 of the World Series when Kelly Gruber clearly tagged an Atlanta Braves base runner before he reached base. Same thing happened to me in a T-ball game in 1978.

4 Will and Kate's first anniversary. The world's most famous couple is celebrating their first anniversary this Sunday. Can you believe nearly 365 days have passed since two billion people watched the royal wedding!? Before you know it, WillKat will be celebrating 10 years of marriage with their three kids, two pets and 1.5 cars. In their palace.

5 They grow up fast. A father from the Netherlands filmed his daughter every week from birth up until age 12, and posted a time-lapse video of her growth, called Portrait of Lotte, on Vimeo. It has gone viral, and said dad has totally raised the daddy bar. Message to soon-to-be dads: Get your video cameras ready. You have a lot of filming to do.

6 Ron Artest. He changed his name to Metta World Peace but the L.A. Laker should consider changing it back to Ron Artest or Metta World Chaos after the absolutely vicious elbow he threw at Oklahoma City's James Harden in a game on Sunday. The reputation he worked so hard to restore after that incident in 2004 where he climbed into the stands and started a brawl with fans at the Palace of Auburn Hills, Mich. ? Gone.

7 Kim Kardashian and Kanye West. If you were to put two of the most self-indulgent, conceited, narcissistic people together in the ultimate exercise in match-making egocentrism, you would get this couple. And it has happened. They are an item. But this might not work. See, they are both in love with someone else. Themselves.

8 Ford's weigh-in cancelled. Toronto Mayor Rob Ford, who began his Cut the Waist challenge in January, hoping to lose 50 pounds by June, keeps cancelling his weekly weigh-ins. For the third time in a month, he didn't show up. Either he "chickened out" or was too busy trimming budgets rather than himself.

9 Red Hot Chili Peppers. Next week, they'll release We Salute You, an EP of classic covers to celebrate their recent induction into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in Cleveland, including covers of previous inductees like the Ramones and Neil Young. Doubt Axl Rose would ever do such a thing. He refused to be inducted with his band, Guns N' Roses. (Un)sweet child.

They grow up fast. Watch young Lott e go from baby to pre-teen in the video at metronews.ca/voices/metrotube-of-the-day. VIMEO

Get your blood pumping

IMAGEWISE LTD/REX FEATURES

Body art

U.K. needs more blood this year

LONDON. It's what you can call 'body art-ery.' Donors from each of the four main blood groups are painted with vessels to raise awareness of the need for donors of all blood types. Britain's National Health Service says it needs 30 per cent more blood than normal during the Diamond Jubilee and Olympic Games. **METRO**

Running low

Public events affect donations

REASONS. The increase is needed because of the high number of events in Britain this year. Past experience shows that donors miss appointments during national celebrations as routines are disrupted. This, combined with foreign visitors with a different blood mix, may also put a high demand on specific blood groups. **METRO**

Donation 101

- After donating, blood is broken up into different parts in a centrifuge machine; red blood cells are then separated from liquid plasma.
- 65 per cent of all blood donations are made in developed countries, home to just 25 per cent of the world's population.

Every unit counts

7,000

extra units of blood (each approximately half a litre) is what hospitals in England and North Wales need every day to deal with medical demands. Each unit saves or improves the lives of three patients.

Metropolitan Panel

Register at metropolitanpanel.ca and take the quick poll

Have you ever been a victim of workplace bullying?

Twitter

@Kooukiemonster: I think what I'll miss most is the walks home from the library... As weird as that sounds, they were a big part of 1st yr #grateful #UWO

@kanadakrazee: Help me out #LDNONT Where can a gal get a cut/colour that doesn't cost me a weeks worth of groceries!? #haircut

@mwickett: People who ride their bike on the sidewalk should be flogged repeatedly.

@wendysland : Ok, seriously could this day possibly get any better? . . . . I'm thinking so! #bepositive

@davenetty: Driving downtown in London right now is actually stupid. #ldnont

@arfou9: can't believe its all coming to an end. really gonna miss this place #saugeen #UWO

metro
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Jason Segel and Emily Blunt have a long wait before their nuptials in The Five-Year Engagement. HANDOUT

Reel Guys

RICHARD CROUSE AND MARK BRESLIN

Waiting for a wedding

The Five-Year Engagement.

Rom-com driven by its charming and charismatic coupling

Richard: Mark, somewhere etched on a stone tablet are the Rules of Rom-Coms™. All romantic comedies, it seems, must have an unlikely couple meet, fall in love, hit an obstacle and then reconcile just before the credits roll. Five-Year Engagement is no different, but shakes up the formula with some dark comedy — frostbite, anyone? — and two leads with charm and charisma to burn.

Mark: Normally I would appreciate the dark touches in a movie like this, but instead I found they wrecked the comic tone. That tone, incidentally, was also compromised by an uneven script that was just too long and repetitive. I have nothing but praise for the actors, though. I cared about the two leads, and without them there would be no picture, but it was all the wonderful comic turns by some of my favourite character-savvy comedians that made the film. My favourite? Brian Posehn, from the Sarah Silverman Show. Yours, Richard?

RC: I agree with you to a point. I liked the darker touches because they helped separate this from the run-of-the-mill rom-com. Having said that, they also weigh down the midsection of the movie. Luckily this isn't Kristen Bell, or worse yet, Katherine Heigl and any other Standard Romantic Male Lead™, but Blunt and Segel. They are the engine that keeps the movie moving forward. They are helped not only by Posehn, but also Community's Alison Brie, who is a scene-stealer. Watching her and Blunt have a grown-up conversation in Muppet voices is worth the long running time.

MB: Almost, but not quite. The five-year engagement should not feel like it's spooling out in real time. The Muppet scene is priceless. So is Segal's desperate and exhausted sex scene with his younger girlfriend. And if it's dark comedy you like, look no further than Segal's brunch with his parents toward the end of the movie. There is indeed much to admire and enjoy in this movie. But all the jokes that involved life in small-town Michigan seemed worn, as did the restaurant scenes. The university researchers made me laugh, mostly due to Kevin Hart, Mindy Kaling and Randall Park. But see? Too much going on here!

RC: It could have used some trimming, but for me it succeeds not because it follows Rules of Rom-Coms™ but because it doesn't.

MB: And the liberal use of Van Morrison tunes nudges this one over into the plus column for me.

Synopsis

Jason Segel is Tom, a San Francisco chef engaged to his girlfriend Violet (Emily Blunt). The quirky couple — they go to parties dressed as Princess Diana and Super Bunny — are a perfect match, but circumstance is getting in the way of the wedding plans. First Violet's sister Suzie (Alison Brie) preempts her sister's big day by getting pregnant and planning a shotgun wedding. Then psychology student Violet accepts a place in a two-year graduate program at the University of Michigan, once again placing a speed bump in the way of their walk down the aisle.

- Richard: ●●●○○
- Mark: ●●○○○

2

SCENE

Scene in brief

Houston sparkles

Cee Lo Green, Mike Epps and Jordin Sparks help Whitney Houston return to the big screen for the last time in the girl-group movie Sparkle. Houston served as executive producer of the movie, which had already finished filming in Detroit when she died in Beverly Hills on Feb. 11 at age 48. A brief preview Wednesday night at the CinemaCon conference in Las Vegas featured Houston's trademark dazzling smile as she danced in a living room in celebration. The remake of the 1976 movie stars Houston as the mother of three girls who form a singing group and struggle with fame and drug addiction. The movie, scheduled for release in August, was seen as a comeback vehicle for the superstar.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

On the web

Spidey's rogues' gallery to rattle new The Amazing Spider-Man game

Action

Safe

Director. Boaz Yakim

Stars. Jason Statham, Catherine Chan

●●○○○

While Jason Statham has shown acting skill, the British star's one-note script choices — like playing a former crooked cop seeking redemption by saving a mathematically-gifted young girl from the mob — does little to advance his typecasting. Plus, plenty of up-close frenzied fight scenes only muddle what's an already formulaic action-thriller. If he keeps turning out movies like Safe, Statham will surely end up this generation's Chuck Norris.

STEVE GOW

Comedy

The Pirates! Band of Misfits

Director. Peter Lord

Stars. Hugh Grant, David Tennant

●●●●○

Another fantastic stop-motion comedy from filmmaker Peter Lord (Chicken Run), The Pirates! tells the tale of a band of bumbling buccaneers trying to upgrade their captain's award status from "best anecdote of a squid" to the Pirate of the Year despite his sheer incompetence. With plenty of clever visual gags (too many for just one viewing) and witty detail, Lord delivers a triumphant treasure chest for audiences of every age.

STEVE GOW

Thriller

The Raven

Director. James McTeigue

Stars. John Cusack, Alice Eve

●●●○○

Taking the meta-film stance that an ever melancholy, alcohol-fuelled Edgar Poe might have been embroiled in a real life serial killer case with his own work as the key is a pleasingly post-modern device. And while director James (V for Vendetta) McTeigue's film never really rises to the wild heights that premise promises, it's still an entertaining, handsomely designed yarn well told, undermined somewhat by a meat and potatoes script and some weak supporting casting. But John Cusack, finally playing his age, is fantastic.

CHRIS ALEXANDER

Quoted

"This father is doing everything he can to just keep things going, keep electricity going, to keep this little baby going...

"My little girl means the whole world to me. I really want to believe that if I was placed in the same situation that I would rise above, that I would be able to see it through the end and do what it would take to make sure my baby came out on top."

Actor Paul Walker on playing a father struggling to keep his newborn daughter alive in a New Orleans hospital ravaged by Hurricane Katrina in the suspense drama, Hours, which started production recently in The Big Easy.

Heather Ogden and McGee Maddox of the National Ballet of Canada in Romeo and Juliet
Photo: Bruce Zinger
Photo: Cristina Weems
Photo: Angelo Barsetti
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OTTAWA

Avengers assemble! The stars talk about getting in character

Teaming up. It takes a lot to balance superpowers and share the spotlight with a bunch of other big names

NED EHRBAR
Metro World News in Hollywood

Samuel L. Jackson

It's all been leading up to this: Four years after Iron Man — with The Incredible Hulk, Iron Man 2, Thor and Captain America in between — The Avengers assembles Marvel's team of superheroes into the summer's most jam-packed blockbuster.

Written and directed by Buffy creator Joss Whedon, the film finds our heroes united, trading barbs while battling Loki, the superbaddie from Thor. We asked each member to reflect on the making of the film, and check in with some of the supporting cast, too.

Captain America Chris Evans on his role in the team:
I give all these orders. It's like, 'Hulk, you do this impossible thing. Thor, you bottleneck a portal, and Iron Man, you fly over here — and I'll take the stairs' (laughs).

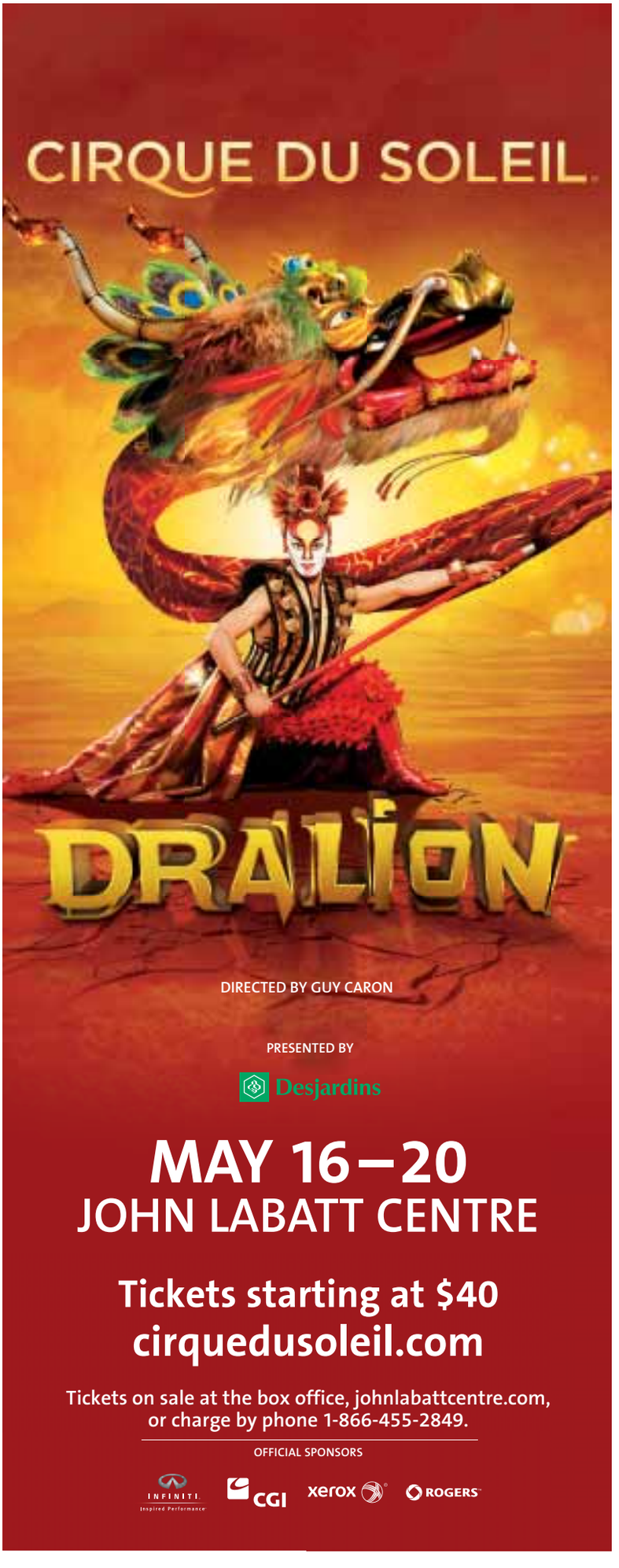
Thor Chris Hemsworth on being a graceful Norse god:
I have one [fight] scene where I was on the wire — because I hadn't learned to fly yet — and I was supposed to come down and land on a cliff. I was supposed to land, step and have a conversation. The first couple of takes, I just face-planted into the dirt. Very ungraceful and un-superhero-like.

Mark Ruffalo on taking on the mantle of The Incredible Hulk character (he's the third actor to play this role in a decade):
It was terrifying. I knew what my responsibility was, or I felt it just by making the mistake of going online and reading some of the fanboy responses to the announcement that I was playing the next version of Bruce Banner. And that was a mistake. I will never do that again. But I never had a role more scrutinized and criticized before I even shot a single frame.

Iron Man Robert Downey Jr. on not going it alone anymore:
I remember I would get nervous about [the idea of pairing up the superheroes] and excited about it and doubtful of it. By the time Chris and Chris had launched their individual franchises with success and charisma, and by the time we had Mark, I was like, wow. So just being a worker among workers is kind of where I started out and it was nice to not have to really have to carry a movie. And everyone was really, really, really equal in this venture.

Hawkeye Jeremy Renner on how surreal it was to assemble the team for the first time:
I think it's just getting all of the actors in one room all in costume — it was like Halloween. I was friends with them as humans, and now they're dressed up like silly people. When everybody was together, that was the most memorable. And creepy and funny. Getting to play with Thor's hammer while he stroked my bow. Oh here we go, that's going to be great. That's going to get me in trouble.

Nick Fury Samuel L. Jackson on being the straight man (unsurprisingly, he didn't love it):
I kept wanting to say [to Thor], 'I don't come your world to blow s--- up,' but they won't let me say it!



THESE PAGES COVER MOVIE START TIMES FROM FRI., APRIL 27 TO THURS., MAY 3. TIMES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE. COMPLETE LISTINGS ARE ALSO AVAILABLE AT METRONEWS.CA/MOVIES.

London

Mustang Drive-In -London 2551 Wilton Grove Rd.

21 Jump Street (14A) Fri-Sun 11:10 Tue 11:10 Thu 11:10 American Reunion (14A) Fri-Sun 9 Tue 9 Thu 9
The Raven (18A) Fri-Sun 10:40 Tue 10:40 Thu 10:40 Safe (14A) Fri-Sun 8:50 Tue 8:50 Thu 8:50

Hyland Cinema 240 Wharncliffe Road South

Jeff, Who Lives at Home (14A) Fri 9:15 Sat 5:15 Sun 9:10 Mon 3-7 Tue 9:10 Wed 5 Thu 9:10 Salmon Fishing in the Yemen (PG) Fri 12:50 Sat 7 Sun 5:05 Mon 1 Tue 5 Wed 3 Thu 12:50-7:10 Undefeated (PG) Fri 5 Sat 1 Sun 3 Mon 4:50 Tue 3 Wed 7 Thu 5 W.E. (14A) Fri 2:50-7:05 Sat 3:05-9 Sun 12:50-7 Mon 9 Tue 12:50-7 Wed 12:50-9:10 Thu 2:50

Rainbow Cinemas London 355 Wellington St.

The Cabin in the Woods (18A) Fri-Thu 3:25-9:20 Chimpanzee (G) Fri-Thu 1:15-3:30-7:15-9 The Five-Year Engagement (14A) Fri-Thu 1:15-3:55-6:55-9:35
The Hunger Games (PG) Fri-Thu 1-4-7-9:45 The Lucky One (PG) Fri-Wed 1:05-3:35-7:20-9:40 Thu 1-3:35-7:20-9:40
The Pirates! Band of Misfits (PG) Fri-Thu 1:10-3:15-7:10-9:10 The Raven (18A) Fri-Thu 1:30-3:55-7:25-9:50 The Three Stooges (PG) Fri-Thu 1:25-7:05

Western Film Room 340, UCC Building,

John Carter (PG) Fri-Thu 7

Wellington 8 Cinemas

983 Wellington Rd. S, 519-685-2529
21 Jump Street (14A) Fri 6:30-9:20 Sat-Sun 12:50-3:40-6:30-9:20 Mon-Thu 6:30-9:20
American Reunion (14A) Fri 7:10-9:50 Sat-Sun 12:40-4:10-7:10-9:50 Mon-Thu 7:10-9:50 The Cabin in the Woods (18A) Fri 7:30-9:55 Sat-Sun 1:30-4:20-7:30-9:55 Mon-Thu 7:30-9:55 The Five-Year Engagement (14A) Fri 6:45-9:40 Sat-Sun 12:30-3:30-6:45-9:40 Mon-Thu 6:45-9:40
The Lucky One (PG) Fri 6:50-9:30 Sat-Sun 1:10-4-6:50-9:30 Mon-Thu 6:50-9:30
Marvel's the Avengers 3D (STC) Thu 12
The Pirates! Band of Misfits (PG) Sat-Sun 1
The Pirates! Band of Misfits 3D (PG) Fri 6:40-9:10 Sat-Sun 3:20-6:40-9:10 Mon-Thu 6:40-9:10
The Raven (18A) Fri 7-9:45 Sat-Sun 12:45-3:50-7-9:45 Mon-Thu 7-9:45
Safe (14A) Fri 7:20-10 Sat-Sun 1:20-3:45-7:20-10 Mon-Thu 7:20-10

Cineplex Odeon Westmount & VIP Cinemas 755 Wonderland Road South

21 Jump Street (14A) Fri 5-7:35-10:20 Sat 12-2:30-5-7:35-10:20 Sun 1:40-4:15-6:50-9:35 Mon 7:25-10:05 Tue 4:30-7:25-10:05 Wed 7:25-10:05 Thu 6:30
American Reunion (14A) Fri 5:05-7:40-10:30 Sat 12-2:35-5:05-7:40-10:30 Sun 2-4:35-7:10-9:50 Mon 7:30-10:15 Tue 4:45-7:30-10:15 Wed-Thu 7:30-10:15
The Bright Stream: Bolshoi Ballet - Live (STC) Sun 1 China Heavyweight - A Hot Docs Live Presentation (STC) Wed 9
The Five-Year Engagement (14A) Fri 4:55-7:50-10:45 Sat 2-4:55-7:50-10:45 Sun 1:30-4:25-7:20-10:15 Mon 7:10-10:10 Tue 4:10-7:10-10:10 Wed-Thu 7:10-10:10 Fri 3:45-6:45-9:40 Sat-Sun 12:40-3:45-6:45-9:40 Mon 6:45-9:40 Tue 3:50-6:45-9:40 Wed-Thu 6:45-9:40 Star & Strollers Screening, Wed 1 The Hunger Games (PG) Fri 3:50-7-10:10 Sat-Sun 12:40-3:50-7-10:10 Mon 6:50-9:55 Tue 3:40-6:50-9:55 Wed-Thu 6:50-9:55 Fri 4:10-7:15-10:30 Sat 1:10-4:10-7:15-10:30 Sun 1:10-4:10-7:15-10:20 Mon 7:15-10:15 Tue 4:10-7:15-10:15 Wed-Thu 7:15-10:15
Indie Game: The Movie - A Hot Docs Live Presentation (STC) Thu 9 The Lucky One (PG) Fri 5:45-8:15-10:50 Sat 12:30-3:15-5:45-8:20-10:50 Sun 12:30-3:05-5:30-8-10:30 Mon 7:20-9:50 Tue 4:50-7:20-9:50 Wed-Thu 7:20-9:50 Fri 4:40-7:45-10:10 Sat 1:40-4:40-7:45-10:10 Sun 1:40-4:40-7:45-10:05 Mon 7:45-10 Tue 4:40-7:45-10 Wed-Thu 7:45-10 Mirror Mirror (PG) Fri 7:20 Sat 12:05-2:40-8:10 Sun 7:30 Mon-Tue 6:55 Wed 6:30 Thu 6:55 The Pirates! Band of Misfits (PG) Sat-Sun 12:45 Star & Strollers Screening, Wed 1
The Pirates! Band of Misfits 3D (PG) Fri 5:15-7:30-9:45 Sat-Sun 3-5:15-7:30-9:45 Mon 7-9:20 Tue 4:40-7-9:20 Wed-Thu 7-9:20 The Raven (18A) Fri 5:20-8-10:40 Sat 12:10-2:45-5:20-8-10:40 Sun 2:15-5:10-7:45-10:25 Mon 7:40-10:20 Tue 5-7:40-10:20 Wed-Thu 7:40-10:20
The Three Stooges (PG) Fri 4:45-10 Sat 5:10-10:45 Sun 5-10 Mon 9:30 Tue 4:20-9:30 Thu 9:30

SilverCity London 1680 Richmond St

21 Jump Street (14A) Fri 2:50-5:30-8:05-10:50 Sat 12:10-2:50-5:30-8:05-10:50 Sun 1:35-4:15-7-9:40 Mon-Tue 1:35-4:15-7-10:15 Wed-Thu 1:35-4:15-7-9:40
American Reunion (14A) Fri 2:35-5:10-7:45-10:25 Sat 11:55-2:35-5:10-7:45-10:25 Sun 1:25-4:05-7:25 Mon-Thu 1:25-4:10-7:10-9:55 The Cabin in the Woods (18A) Fri-Sat 3:10-5:30-8:05-10:40 Sun 4:05-7:20-9:50 Mon-Thu 4-7:20-9:45
Chimpanzee (G) Fri 1:10-3:05-5:05-7:05-9:05 Sat 11:10-1:10-3:05-5:05-7:05-9:05 Sun-Tue 1:10-3:05-5:05-7:05-9:05 Wed 3:05-5:05-7:05-9:05 Thu 1:10-3:05-5:05-7:05-9:05 Star & Strollers Screening Wed 1
Dr. Seuss' the Lorax 3D (G) Fri 1:05-3:15-5:25 Sat 11:20-5:25 Sun 1-3:20-5:25 Mon 1:15-3:20 Tue-Thu 1:15-3:20-5:25
The Five-Year Engagement (14A) Fri-Sat 2-4:50-7:55-10:55 Sun 1:05-4:15-7:05-10:10 Mon 1:05-4:15-7:05-10:05 Tue 1:05-4:15-7:05-10:10 Wed 4:15-7:05-10:05 Thu 1:05-4:15-7:05-10:05 Star & Strollers Screening, Wed 1
Gladiator (14A) Mon 7
The Hunger Games (PG) Fri-Sun 12:55-4:10-7:15-10:20 Mon-Thu 12:55-3:50-6:50-9:45 The Lucky One (PG) Fri-Sat 12:45-3:10-5:35-8:15-10:55 Sun 12:45-3:10-5:35-8:05-10:30 Mon 1:45-4:50-7:30-9:55 Tue 1:45-4:50-7:30-10:15 Wed-Thu 1:45-4:50-7:30-9:55
Madagascar (G) Sat 11
Marvel's the Avengers: An IMAX 3D Experience (STC) Thu 12:01
Metropolitan Opera: Manon Lescaut - Encore (STC) Sat 12
Mirror Mirror (PG) Fri-Sun 12:50 Mon-Thu 1:30 The Pirates! Band of Misfits (PG) Fri-Sun 12:40 Mon-Thu 1
The Pirates! Band of Misfits 3D (PG) Fri-Sun 3-5:15-7:30-9:45 Mon-Thu 3:15-5:30-7:45-10 The Raven (18A) Fri-Sat 2:45-5:20-8-10:45 Sun 1:30-4:20-7:35-10:15 Mon 1:20-4:05-7:15-9:50 Tue 1:20-4:05-7:15-10:05 Wed-Thu 1:20-4:05-7:15-9:50 Safe (14A) Fri-Sat 1-3:20-5:40-8:10-10:35 Sun 1-3:20-5:40-8-10:25 Mon-Thu 1:40-4:30-6:55-9:35 Titanic: An IMAX 3D Experience (PG) Fri-Sun 12:45-4:45-8:45 Mon-Wed 1-4:45-8:45 Thu 12:50-4:30-8:10
Wrath of the Titans 3D (14A) Fri-Sat 8:40-11 Sun 10 Mon 10:05 Tue-Thu 7:25-10:05
WWE Extreme Rules - 2012 (STC) Sun 8

Tony Hale: Hail to the Veep

Tony Hale. GETTY IMAGES

New sitcom. Arrested Development star plays another loveable loser in another co-dependent relationship

AMBER RAY
Metro World News in New York

Tony Hale's latest role finds him in an unhealthy, co-dependent relationship with a domineering woman. He is neurotic, but smart. And we're not even referring to Hale's reprisal of Buster Bluth on the new episodes of Arrested Development slated to hit Netflix next year.

Before he straps on Buster's prosthetic hand (bit off by a seal, fans of Arrested will recall), Hale appears as another loveable loser: Gary Walsh, personal aide to vice-president of the United States Selina Meyer (Julia Louis-Dreyfus), on HBO Canada's new political satire Veep. (Armando Iannucci, the man behind the razor-sharp political commentary, In the Loop, created the show.)

"With Buster's social anxiety, if he were placed in Gary's situation, he would be committed (to a mental institution)," Hale says. Meanwhile, we learn through the sitcom's documentary style that Gary thrives under pressure, ready at a moment's notice with whatever his boss may need — be it a conversational factoid on the politicians she may be chatting with, or hand sanitizer.

"Gary is very, very efficient," Hale says. "He carries around this bag with all of Selina's stuff, everything from an extra pair of shoes for her to, if needed, a letter of resignation."

That letter of resignation would be for Selina, Hale clarifies, because without his job, Gary would be lost.

"If somebody were to come up to him and say, 'You're fired,' I think he would fall apart," Hale says. "He's a guy who should have left his job in his 20s, but the fact of the matter is that his identity is wrapped around Selina. He pretty much worships her. I have a feeling that his mother has been carried over into Selina, so I'm sure there are a lot of childhood wounds that are being played out."

Mama Bluth would be so proud.

Politicians are humans, too

Behind closed doors, vice-president Selina Meyers and her team behave badly — very badly. But the more preposterous the situation, Hale hypothesizes, the more truthful it seems.

- "One person cannot be that positive and mechanical and perfect all the time. They have to have a breakdown; they have to go behind the scenes and scream at somebody."

TV Picks

Start over again with The Big C

If you haven't had a chance to watch the lauded series The Big C from the beginning, it's not too late. On Friday, W Network starts airing the dark half-hour comedy, which stars three-time Oscar nominee Laura Linney as a reserved suburban wife and mother who begins to look at life differently as she battles cancer. (W Network)

Soapdish offers frothy fun

The 1991 comedy Soapdish is frothing with hilarious melodrama and over-the-top characters on Friday. Kevin Kline plays a soap star who once dated daytime drama queen Celeste (Sally Field) and gets dangerously close to an innocent new cast member (Elisabeth Shue) on her series. Cathy Moriarty co-stars as Celeste's rival while Robert Downey Jr. plays a producer. (Bravo)

Getting candid with Conrad Black

W5 features a candid interview between CTV National News anchor Lisa LaFlamme and fallen media baron Conrad Black on Saturday. Though the episode is a repeat, it's timely as Black is due for release next month from a U.S. prison after serving a reduced sentence for fraud. (CTV)

Relive the royal wedding

It was a year ago Sunday that Prince William and Kate tied the knot in a lavish ceremony at Westminster Abbey. Viewers can get caught up in the royal wedding fervour all over again with three documentaries: William and Kate, Royal Documentary; William and Kate, A Love Story; and Royal Documentary: The Future King and Queen. (Slice)

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Joy Williams, left, and John Paul White of musical group The Civil Wars pose backstage with their Grammy awards. MARK J. TERRILL/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

From failure to the front page

Breakthrough success. After flirting with failure, Civil Wars enjoy doing their Grammy-winning victory lap

It was just a few years ago that John Paul White — now one-half of the gritty Americana duo the Civil Wars — was ready to surrender his music career.

White had released his debut solo record to little fanfare in 2008 and toiled for years prior as a songwriting hired gun in Nashville who had made few contacts and fewer industry inroads.

So he decided to head back to college for a second degree, with an eye toward possibly becoming a teacher.

"I knew I didn't really want to do the solo artist thing anymore, and I had no other thoughts of any other kind of way of staying in the business," White recalled during an interview this week in Toronto.

"I thought, I had my run. I got to do what most people never get to do, and that was make music for a living. So I was slightly bitter that things didn't turn out the way I wanted them to, but I was content and I was OK with it."

It was then that White was paired up with another struggling Nashville-based artist with nearly a decade of false starts behind her.

Joy Williams had put out solo records in obscurity since 2001 when she was randomly paired with White in a songwriting session.

Both artists entered the collaboration with a weary skepticism honed through years of go-nowhere pairings and projects in the country music capital. But they hit it off.

The unlikely coupling — neither Williams nor White had been interested in forming a band, let alone a duo — has led to even more unlikely success.

Under the appropriately backward-looking moniker the Civil Wars, Williams and White put out their debut album, Barton Hollow — a sparse, elegantly subtle collection of rustic roots tunes — back in Feb. 1, 2011.

Almost exactly a year later, the pair strolled across the Grammy Awards stage to claim trophies for best folk album and best country duo/group performance, disparate categories hinting at the group's uniquely difficult-to-classify blend of styles and genres. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Sound Check

More useless information on music

SOUND CHECK
Alan Cross
scene@metronews.ca

While researching material for my radio show, The Secret History of Rock, I often come across information about music that's utterly fascinating but doesn't fit into anything I'm doing at the moment.

Because it seems a shame not to use this stuff, I hereby present it to you.

• Plastic surgeons are developing new techniques for restoring a youthful appearance to aging female hands that have become veiny with loose skin. Physicians and clients are referring to this condition as Madonna hands.

• When Pete Townshend of The Who appeared as a character on The Simpsons, the role was actually voiced by Pete's brother Paul.

• Geddy Lee of Rush donated his entire collection of 200 autographed baseballs from the old Negro Baseball League to their hall of fame in Kansas City.

• Back in the 1960s, David Bowie appeared in a TV commercial for an ice cream bar called Luv.

The ad was directed by a young Ridley Scott.

• Johnny Lydon and Public Image Ltd. once appeared on American Bandstand.

• The first hit single to run more than four minutes was Harry Belafonte's Mary's Boy Child. When it was released in 1957, it ran a scandalous four minutes and 12 seconds.

• Paul McCartney has had hit singles as a solo artist as well a member of a duo, trio, quartet, quintet and sextet.

• The Blur song Song 2 was the second song to be recorded for that album. It was track two on the CD and the second single from the record, reaching number two on the British charts. And the song is exactly two minutes long.

• Thomas Dolby — Remember the song She Blinded Me With Science? — moved to Silicon Valley where he invented a tiny synthesizer-on-a-chip that makes ringtones possible. It's been installed on more than three billion cellphones around the world.

• The first person to utter the words Elvis has left the building was Horace Lee Hogan.

On December 15, 1956, Elvis played in front of 10,000 fans who mobbed the doors backstage when the performance was over. Horace, who was in charge of the gig, grabbed the microphone in an effort to regain control.

He screamed, "Please, young people! Elvis has left the building!"

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Is Fox a mother-to-be?

A month after pregnancy rumours last surfaced, a source is now insisting to E! News that Megan Fox is expecting.

It would be the first child for the 25-year-old actress, though she's also stepmother to husband Brian Austin Green's 10-year-old son, Kassius. Parenthood is definitely a topic Fox hasn't been shy about: "I want at least two, probably three kids," she recently told Cosmopolitan magazine.

"I've always been maternal."

A-Rod hearts Cameron Diaz, George Clooney

Yankees slugger Alex Rodriguez has kept tight-lipped about his relationships, but he's willing to offer some kind words about ex-girlfriend Cameron Diaz.

"I don't like talking about my relationships," Rodriguez tells with The Insider. "But I will tell you about CD: She's probably one of the greatest human beings I've ever met, and just an amazing light."

Of course, Diaz isn't the only A-lister Rodriguez can't help gushing about: "I think my new hero is George Clooney," he says.

"He's my new role model. I think he's done it right."

METRO DISH

OUR TAKE ON THE WORLD OF CELEBRITIES

The Word

Spears gives up rights to dad and fiancé

THE WORD
Dorothy Robinson
scene@metronews.ca

In a sad state of affairs — for Britney Spears, at least — a Los Angeles court has approved a request to add fiancé Jason Trawick as a co-conservator in charge of her finances and decisions, according to TMZ.

Trawick, along with Spears' father, Jamie Spears, will be responsible for all decisions pertaining to the pop star's personal life. Spears has been under the conservatorship since 2008. It was originally reported that her father had requested Trawick be added, but it turns out it was the singer herself.

A lawyer for her father says her client is "thrilled" with the addition.

"It's all in the family."

Shudder. Look, it's apparent that Spears is still kind of a sick puppy and needs the guidance to make sure she doesn't have another spectacular flame-out during which she shaves her head and starts smashing cars with an umbrella and/or loses all of her money to skanky back-up dancers.

But still: Doesn't seeing a successful 30-year-old woman give up her rights to her father and soon-to-be husband feel like some medieval-level-ish?

Jennifer Aniston ALL PHOTOS GETTY IMAGES

Please don't ask Jen about her ex-husband's engagement

This may not come as the biggest surprise, but Jennifer Aniston doesn't really want to talk about Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie's engagement, according to Us Weekly.

"She hates it being brought up because she doesn't really care," a source says. "She feels Angelina can have him. She just wants to move on." Aside from the fact that it's been seven years since Pitt split with her and took up with Jolie, Aniston has moved on herself with boyfriend Justin Theroux.

"Jen's totally happy with Justin," says the source. "That's all in the past."

The best promotional video ever?

Just when you thought Toddlers and Tiaras couldn't get more disturbing: It looks like a certain five-year-old star of the reality show has it in for Justin Bieber.

In a promotional video for the cable TV series, young pageant contestant Bridgett says she wants to be an exterminator when she grows up, but her list of targets is troubling: "I like to kill the worms. I like to kill grasshoppers. I like to kill bees," Bridgett explains.

"I like to kill Justin Bieber."

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This recipe serves six. MATTHEW MEAD/ THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Lip-smacking, slow-cooked comfort food

Balsamic Braised Short Ribs. The deep flavoured sauce and ribs are perfect over mashed potatoes

Short ribs are the ideal cut of meat to be braised. They have quite a bit of marbling and can be tough if not properly cooked. You can get short ribs off the bone, but for the best flavour, opt for on-the-bone.

Braising doesn't have to be as intimidating as you may think it is.

It is really just a matter of cooking food, usually meat, for a long period at a low temperature and submerged in some kind of liquid. Pot roasts are a good example. Many foods cooked in a slow cooker also qualify.

Short ribs are the ideal cut of meat to be braised. They have quite a bit of marbling and can be tough if not properly cooked.

You can also get short ribs off the bone, but for the best flavour, opt for on-the-bone.

This recipe braises in a tangy blend of balsamic vinegar and seasoned stock.

A lot of the flavour comes from the caramelizing of the meat and the vegetables, so don't skimp on the browning. After the meat is tender, you just boil the liquid down to a glaze.

Serve the short ribs and their glaze over mashed potatoes, creamy polenta or egg noodles

1. In heavy-bottomed pot, heat oil over medium heat. Working in batches, sear short ribs for 4 mins. on each side or until well browned; transfer to a plate.

2. Add leeks, onions, carrots, celery and garlic; cook, stirring occasionally, 15 mins. or until well browned. Add tomato paste, salt, red pepper flakes, and black pepper; cook 7 mins. or until tomato paste turns a brick reddish-brown colour.

3. Add vinegar, sugar, rosemary and mustard. Scrape up any browned bits from bottom of pot. Return short ribs to pot, then add beef stock. Bring mix to low simmer and cover. Pot can be left on stovetop on low heat or placed in a 160 C (325 F) oven for 2 hours or until ribs tender when pierced.

4. Carefully transfer meat platter. Cover with foil and a couple of kitchen towels to keep warm. Using slotted spoon, remove and discard solids from liquid. Bring liquid to a boil on stovetop and cook until reduced to 250 ml (1 cup). Drizzle glaze over short ribs and serve.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS/ ADAPTED BY EMILY RICHARDS, PROFESSIONAL HOME ECONOMIST, COOKBOOK AUTHOR AND TV CELEBRITY CHEF. FOR MORE, VISIT EMILYRICHARDSCOOKS.CA)

Ingredients

- 15 ml (1 tbsp) canola oil
- 6 bone-in short ribs
- 2 each leeks (white parts only, sliced), onions (sliced), carrots (peeled and cut into pieces), stalks celery (cut into pieces), 2 cloves garlic (chopped)
- 30 ml (2 tbsp) tomato paste
- 5 ml (1 tsp) salt
- 2 ml (1/2 tsp) red pepper flakes
- 2 ml (1/2 tsp) black pepper
- 125 ml (1/2 cup) balsamic vinegar
- 50 ml (1/4 cup) packed brown sugar
- 3 sprigs fresh rosemary
- 15 ml (1 tbsp) Dijon mustard
- 1 l (4 cups) unsalted beef stock

Liquid Assets

Resurrecting Down Under flavours

LIQUID ASSETS
Peter Rockwell
@therealwineguy
peterrockwell@eastlink.cca

In what seems like a month of celebrity deaths, it's sad that a member of one of my favourite '80s bands went to the great beyond nearly unnoticed.

That got me thinking about wine.

Greg Ham was the sax player for Down Under's Men At Work. A quintessential new wave group, it hit the big time then crashed and burned — much like the Aussie wine industry.

Australian wine was all that and more pre-21st century, but as wineries started chasing the same flavour profile, the liquid homogeny started to bore consumers.

Thankfully, an ever growing crop of interesting new producers have emerged from Australia. Many are taking advantage of the growing popularity of groovy grape blends and old school label graphics.

Gotham Wines' The Wine Men Of Gotham 2008 Grenache Shiraz ($13.99 - $14.99) has a throwback flavour reminiscent of the deep, dark Men At Work-era Aussie reds.

Though the mix of grenache and shiraz is classic French Rhone Valley, the two grapes combine with harmony in a warmer climate and the concentrated berry goodness tastes as lip-smacking on its own as it does with grilled meats from the barbie. PRICES REFLECT THE RANGE ACROSS THE COUNTRY. SOME PRODUCTS MAY NOT BE AVAILABLE IN ALL PROVINCES.

3 LIFE

Superfood

Fennel

A vegetable, a herb or a spice? The sweet, liquorice taste of fennel can be added to food or drunk as a herbal tea.

Renowned for its digestive properties, fennel seeds are often chewed after a meal to aid digestion. Fennel is a fantastic source of vitamin C and a powerful anti oxidant that helps to maintain a healthy immune system.

Superfood

Persimmon

No, it's not a tomato but a persimmon. This bright orange fruit has zero fat and is high in carbs and natural sugars. It's high in fibre and Vitamin A as well.

A recent Japanese study showed that persimmon peel contained the phytochemical proanthcyanidin, thought to protect cells against oxidative damage associated with skin ageing.

ROMINA MCGUINESS/ METRO WORLD NEWS

On the web

Ellen DeGeneres says vegan diet wasn't always easy but she's glad she made the change

4 SPORTS

Maple Leafs

Luongo willing to go to T.O.?

The Vancouver Canucks goalie will include Toronto on a list of teams he would accept a trade to, says TSN, citing sources. Luongo has a no-trade clause but said this week he wouldn't block a trade if the Canucks wanted to move him. His backup, Cory Schneider, won the top job in the playoffs. Luongo is a protegé of Leafs goalie coach Allaire and assistant GM Dave Nonis brought Luongo to Vancouver when Nonis was GM of the Canucks.
TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

On the web

The Phoenix Suns are facing a future without Steve Nash. With the Suns in the midst of a rebuild and Nash set to become a free agent, it could be time for the two-time MVP to finally move on. Scan the code for the story.

Cold game catching on in hot climates

NHL. New batch of teams vying for Stanley Cup after powerhouses make early exits

Coyotes goaltender Mike Smith surveys the action during Game 2 of Phoenix's first-round series against Chicago in Glendale, Ariz. CHRISTIAN PETERSEN/GETTY IMAGES FILE

The Phoenix Coyotes roused a dormant fan base with an energetic season-ending burst that carried into the playoffs.

Lunch-pail likable and brilliantly resilient, they have made hockey cool in the desert again and given the playoffs a distinctive new vibe by reaching the second round for the first time in a quarter century.

And they're not alone.

After years of the same handful of teams competing for the cup, Lord Stanley's mug has some new pursuers.

Red Wings, Canucks, Blackhawks, Bruins — they're all gone. In their place, still in the chase, are the Coyotes, Predators, Kings and Blues.

Parity has taken over in the NHL playoffs, raising the possibility that the Stanley Cup could end up in a place like Nashville or Glendale, Ariz.

"You look at who's out: Detroit, San Jose and on and on," Coyotes general manager Don Maloney said. "And look at Chicago. That's a team that could easily be playing in the finals. That's how tight things are."

Prior to the 2004-05 lockout, the NHL had what felt like an inevitable march towards glory.

From them '90s forward, teams like Pittsburgh, Detroit, New Jersey and Colorado took turns trading the cup, combining for nine titles in a 13-year span. Before that was the Great One's reign in Edmonton, the New York Islanders' dominance and the Montreal monster that seemed to exist since the creation of the NHL.

Tampa Bay broke up the monopoly in 2004 and the change continued after the players returned and the salary cap was put in place, levelling the rink so small-market teams had a chance.

Since the lockout, there have been six different champions, though there still were plenty of intriguing matchups: A pair of Detroit-Pittsburgh finals, Chicago's drought-ending victory over the similarly long-suffering Flyers and last year's don't-change-the-channel matchup between Boston and Vancouver.

This year's Stanley Cup finals could be Florida against Nashville.

That's not a bad thing, just different.

"It's great for the game and great for different markets," Predators coach Barry Trotz said. "For my standpoint, every year with the salary cap the way it is, it's going to be like this going forward that once you get in, it's going to be anyone's sort of ballgame, if you will." THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Quoted

"You know, the Detroits and the Vancouvers, they're gone now, and Pittsburgh, so everybody's going to think 'This is the chance of a lifetime.'"
Ken Hitchcock, St. Louis Blues head coach.

The Predators swarm goalie Pekka Rinne after their series win over Detroit last week.
MARK HUMPHREY/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

By the numbers

35

If Ottawa upset New York and Florida beat the Devils, every team that has won the Stanley Cup in the past 35 years would be gone.

Tennis

Raonic's clay game 'progressing well'

Canadian Milos Raonic dominated sixth-seeded Spaniard Nicolas Almagro 6-3, 6-3 Thursday to reach the quarter-finals of the Barcelona Open.

The 11th seed from Thornhill, Ont., needed just 67 minutes to advance comfortably on Centre Court at the Real Club de Tenis against the clay specialist.

"This was probably my best win on clay," said Raonic. "There's been a big change for me this week. I'm very proud of my play today, and I'm progressing well."

Raonic will face No. 2 seed Andy Murray on Friday. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Milos Raonic reacts after Thursday's win.
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NHL

Chara, Karlsson and Weber in Norris running

Zdeno Chara of the Boston Bruins, Erik Karlsson of the Ottawa Senators and Shea Weber of the Nashville Predators are the finalists for the Norris Trophy for the NHL's best defenceman.

The winner will be announced June 20 at the NHL awards ceremony in Las Vegas.
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Bargnani injury big part of Raps' poor season

NBA. Toronto players feel team is improving and look forward to next season

Andrea Bargnani was talking about his own season unravelling, but he may as well have been talking about how the entire Toronto Raptors' campaign went down the drain.

The Raptors were in Utah in January en route to a victory over the Jazz when the big Italian forward suffered a calf injury that would sideline him for 35 games, a huge blow to a Toronto team that had begun this season with plenty of optimism.

The few minutes before his injury, he said, were about the best he's felt in Toronto.

"That was the best part of the season for me because we won in Phoenix the day before and we were winning. I was really excited," Bargnani said.

"Things change fast."

The Raptors (22-43) managed just nine wins without their leading scorer. They easily defeated the New Jersey Nets 98-67 on Thursday night to wrap up with a flourish their fourth consecutive disappointing season without a playoff appearance.

The mood at the Air Canada Centre, however, was surprisingly upbeat as the players prepared to be post-season spectators yet again.

"Of course we can't be enthusiastic about not making the playoffs," Bargnani said.

"But on the other side, we've started something really good. Coach (Dwane) Casey has changed the culture and we're building something really good.

"That's the right path to take in order to be a winning team. I'm really convinced that his principles worked."

The team went from being one of the worst defensive teams in the league to the middle of the standings. Bargnani was playing the best defence of his career when he went down to injury.

Raptors president and GM Bryan Colangelo called this a season of building before the season tipped off and didn't deviate, sticking to his plan of player development and creating financial flexibility. Colangelo will have money to spend come free agency, the team will have a high draft pick, plus they've got Jonas Valanciunas waiting in the wings. The Raptors took the Lithuanian centre fifth in last year's draft, but left him in Europe this season to continue to develop.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Playoff top seeds

The NBA playoffs start on Saturday.

- In the Eastern conference, Chicago is the No. 1 seed and Miami is No. 2.
- In the West, San Antonio is No. 1 and Oklahoma City is No. 2

Quoted

"I definitely feel it, that we're definitely going to be in the playoffs next year. I can't wait."

Raptors guard DeMar DeRozan

Andrea Bargnani shoots over Joakim Noah of the Chicago Bulls March 24 in Chicago. JONATHAN DANIEL/GETTY IMAGES Inset: Bargnani speaks to the media Thursday in Toronto. NATHAN DENETTE/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Soccer

Newman backed for CSA presidency

Canada's three MLS teams and FC Edmonton have come out in support of Rob Newman for president of the Canadian Soccer Association.

Newman is running against fellow CSA vice-president Victor Montagliani and incumbent Dominique Maestracci.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

NFL draft

As expected, Luck, Griffin go 1, 2

The Indianapolis Colts took Andrew Luck with the No. 1 pick at the NFL draft Thursday night.

The Washington Redskins chose Robert Griffin III second and the Cleveland Browns took Alabama running back Trent Richardson third, trading three selections to Minnesota to move up a spot. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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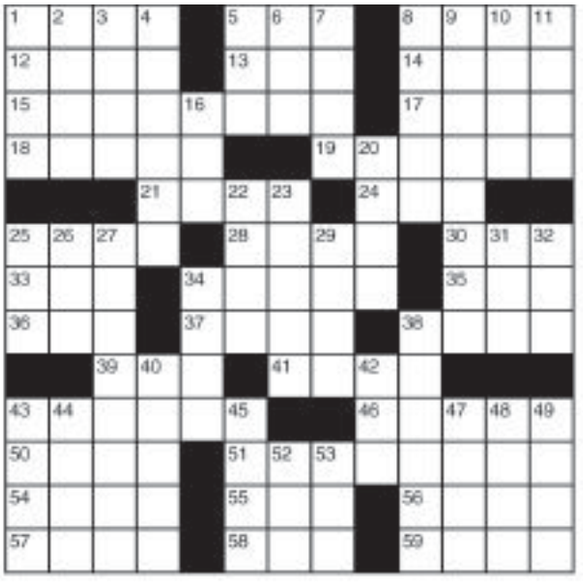
Crossword

Across

1 Approached the plate
5 Erstwhile acorn
8 Easy marks
12 Actress Spelling
13 Evening hour in old Rome
14 Fall hard
15 Most importantly
17 "Three Sisters" sister
18 Huge goof
19 Tortilla chips
21 Obi
24 Ring decision
25 Castle protection
28 Mexican entree
30 Submachine gun
33 Night bird
34 Antitoxin
35 Disencumber
36 Grown-up elver
37 Renders speechless
38 Venomous vipers
39 Bleacher denizen
41 Unwanted e-mail
43 Jagger's band
46 Undergo catharsis
50 Hoodlum
51 Pop song of 1952
54 Dumbo's "wings"
55 Chic no longer
56 Greek vowels
57 Atomizer squirt
58 Teensy
59 Arp's art

Down

1 Impale
2 Timber wolf
3 Unyielding
4 Strip
5 Eggs
6 Have a bug
7 Furnace of a sort
8 Enterprise officer
9 A very late time
10 Comic-strip possum
11 Resorts international?
16 Historic period
20 Fermi's bit
22 Leftovers recipe
23 Cottontails
25 Curly's brother
26 Haven't paid yet
27 Card game for crawlers?
29 Point
31 Energy
32 Driver's lic. et al.
34 Logical
38 Entertained
40 Apprehension
42 Suitable
43 Goblet feature
44 Siamese
45 Pack away
47— -tat-tat
48 Pleased
49 "Born Free" lioness
52 Shading
53 Noshed on



Sudoku

	8						5	
		4		8		6		
9	7						2	1
		8	9	2	1	3		
		1	4	3	6	9		
5	1						4	6
		6		7		5		
	2						8	

How to play
Fill in the grid, so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9. There is no math involved. You solve the puzzle with reasoning and logic.

Yesterday's Sudoku

5	1	9	4	2	6	8	7	3
3	2	4	7	1	8	6	9	5
8	7	6	3	9	5	1	2	4
7	6	5	9	8	3	4	1	2
2	3	8	5	4	1	7	6	9
4	9	1	6	7	2	3	5	8
9	8	2	1	6	4	5	3	7
6	4	3	2	5	7	9	8	1
1	5	7	8	3	9	2	4	6

Yesterday's Crossword

Cryptoquip

How to play
This is a substitution cipher where one letter stands for another. Eg: If X equals O, it will equal O throughout the puzzle.

XZISBA PDLSI HTNUSH TZPSBAN, PDL PDSINPM EVSLBN VSYLX PT UEYL E NPTO GM PDL NOEHL GEI.

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: WHEN PEOPLE ARE CURSING ON A ROLLER COASTER, COULD YOU SAY THEY'RE SWEARING UP AND DOWN?

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: L equals E

For today's crossword answers and for expanded horoscopes, go to metronews.ca

Horoscope

Aries | March 21 - April 20. Anyone who thinks they can blackmail you in any way, shape or form is in for a surprise today.

Taurus | April 21 - May 21. You may have to tread on toes today but that's OK because you have serious things to take care of and you don't have time for pleasantries.

Gemini | May 22 - June 20. You are in a playful mood at the moment and simply cannot be bothered with people whose outlook on life is negative

Cancer | June 21 - July 22. You may feel that someone has let you down, but it's not the end of the world, so snap out of it.

Leo | July 23 - Aug. 22. You have a knack of being able to make other people believe you. Use that talent to your advantage.

Virgo | Aug. 23 - Sept. 22. It's not true that you don't have as much talent as your rivals, so stop tormenting yourself.

Libra | Sept. 23 - Oct. 22. You can probably bluff your way out of trouble quite easily today but don't think you can go down this route indefinitely.

Scorpio | Oct. 23 - Nov. 21. Don't push yourself too hard over the next two or three days because the serious stuff can quite safely be left until Monday morning.

Sagittarius | Nov. 22 - Dec. 21. You won't be in a very chatty mood today, not at all your usual happy-go-lucky Sagittarian self.

Capricorn | Dec. 22 - Jan 20. It seems you have come to the conclusion that certain issues are not worth getting worked up about.

Aquarius | Jan. 21 - Feb 18. Don't give up on something just because it turns out to be harder than you expected.

Pisces | Feb. 19 - March 20. It's a good time to approach people in positions of authority. Show them that you are serious about moving up in the world they will help you in every way they can. SALLY BROMPTON

Caption Contest

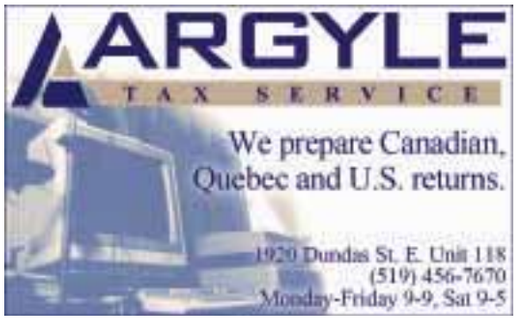
"You are getting sleeeeeeepy"
Danille

MICHAEL PROBST/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Win!

You write it!

Write a funny caption for the image above and send it to play@metronews.ca — the winning caption will be published in tomorrow's Metro.



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